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Celebrating two decades of shaping business leadership for sustainability

This year marks the 20th anniversary of The Prince of Wales's Business and Sustainability Programme (BSP). Launched shortly after the first Rio Earth Summit as the Business and Environment Programme, this ground-breaking initiative recognised that the contribution from the business community to the sustainability debate was critical. Since then the programme has influenced over 2,200 leaders representing some 1,000 organisations from more than 75 countries.

The BSP, one of the longest running and most prominent business and sustainability executive education forums, celebrates its 20th anniversary in April 2014 with a special seminar in Cambridge, UK. The programme trains approximately 150 leaders each year on the business interface with major environmental and socioeconomic issues, helping to translate the latest science, thinking and innovative practice for senior decision makers.

"Leaders in business can drive great change in how society develops. Through the BSP I have seen how leaders can bring a broader scan of the horizon into their strategic thinking and everyday operations, affecting people's lives and the natural world," explains **David Rice, Fellow at the University of Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership (CPSL)**.

The programme was established by **CPSL's patron, HRH The Prince of Wales**, who comments: "It was CPSL's inspiring ability to combine breadth and depth of understanding of sustainability issues in a way that makes the whole subject come alive to business leaders and policy makers that persuaded me to ask them to run my Business and Sustainability Programme. I must say I am pleased that I did."

As early as 1994 the programme took as its premise that, in order to be successful in the long run, businesses need to develop policies and strategies to bring about a convergence between profitability and sustainability. **Polly Courtice, CPSL's Director**, notes that during this time "The BSP has helped shape the business environment on this agenda by normalising the conversation. In its early years the programme tended to focus on addressing the nature of the problem, but more recently it has focused on how best to respond. When senior executives go back into their organisations and the thing that is driving the business is the next quarter's results, they are armed with hard-nosed business solutions and business relevant insights."

The BSP runs annual senior executive seminars in Cambridge, Brazil, continental Europe, Australia, and South Africa, with plans to launch in Asia next year. "More and more of our delegates originate outside the UK and non-OECD countries in particular. The average seminar includes more than ten different nationalities across all continents, a truly global perspective which makes for a very rich exchange", says **Aris Vrettos, the programme's director**.



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The programme is used by major companies across different sectors, such as Anglo American, Coca-Cola, Nestlé, Petronas, Sainsbury's and Tata, as well as government agencies and development banks, to support their sustainable business strategies and build their leadership capacity. **Andy Wales, Senior Vice President Sustainable Development, SABMiller**, notes that "SABMiller are involved in the programme as it helps shape the understanding of our leaders around how sustainability risks and opportunities relate to the corporate world, as well as demonstrating the role senior executives play within the organisation to drive change. Our senior executives value the programme as it takes them on a thoughtful journey which culminates in a clear plan on how to drive forward the sustainability agenda and make a difference within the company at a strategic level."

The **University of Cambridge's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz**, said "The University of Cambridge has harnessed the Business and Sustainability Programme for 20 years to translate leading edge research into compelling insights for senior executives. By acting as an interface between the University and business, the Programme has exposed international organisations to the latest thinking and analytical frameworks, in turn inspiring new business models and solutions. As cross-cutting global issues increasingly feature as major dimensions of the business agenda, the Programme will continue to play a significant role in the business world for decades to come."

The 20th anniversary of the programme will be marked at the Cambridge Senior Executives' Seminar in April 2014 with a number of special activities and sessions with Prof David Mackay, Chief Scientific Advisor to the Department of Energy and Climate Change, Antonio Mexia, Chief Executive EDP Energias de Portugal, and Jeremy Wilson, Vice Chairman of Corporate Banking at Barclays. It will be the programme's 75th seminar.

For more information please visit www.cpsl.cam.ac.uk/bsp.

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Notes to editors

Interviews available on request

Quotes from BSP delegates 2012-2013:

'A huge privilege to learn from - and amongst - such interesting, capable and experienced people'
Beth Hart, Head of Product Development & Technology, Sainsbury's, Nov 2012

"Felt recharged and equipped to handle difficult questions"
Amit Saha, CSO, Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages, Nov 2013

'The best part of the seminar was hearing the various business perspectives. We're not often in the same room and being required to find paths to engagement on such a complex topic'
Sandra Pepera, Deputy Director, Policy Division, DFID, Nov 2012



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'Truly inspiring, insightful and highly educational. A "must attend" seminar for all business leaders in this area'

Gerardo Mazzeo, Assistant Vice President-Global Innovation Director and CSV Manager, Nestlé, April 2013

"This is a fantastic programme! An eye-opener and it certainly will change my approach towards earth and society, my work and the effect the company seeks in its way to achieve its optimum business targets"

Shaliza Adb Malek, Senior Legal Counsel, PETRONAS, Nov 2013

'My understanding of sustainability has been turned on its head- thank you! You took me through something very special'

Froydis Cameron-Johansson, Head of Corporate Affairs, Environment and Compliance Exploration, Anglo American, April 2013

About the University of Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership (CPSL)

In 2013, the Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership (CPSL) celebrated its 25th anniversary of working with leaders on the critical global challenges faced by business and society.

CPSL contributes to the University's mission and leadership position in the field of sustainability via a mix of executive programmes, business platforms and strategic engagements, informed by world-class thinking and research. Its leadership network consists of more than 5,000 alumni from leading global organisations and an expert team of Fellows, Senior Associates and staff.

HRH The Prince of Wales is the patron of CPSL, which is a member of The Prince's Charities, a group of not-for-profit organisations of which His Royal Highness is President.

About The Prince of Wales's Business and Sustainability Programme

Over its 20 year history, The Prince of Wales's Business and Sustainability Programme has established a reputation as the leading international, cross-industry and cross-sector forum for sustainable business.

The Business & Sustainability Programme provides a strategic forum for senior decision makers to explore responses to the risks and opportunities that these challenges represent, and to develop innovative and pragmatic approaches to reconciling profitability and sustainability.

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